

Unlike many descriptions in the literature, this bird was very obliging and appeared completely oblivious to our presence, allowing a close approach. It fed by standing still for up to 30 s, flicking leaves aside with its bill, before hopping a metre or so to another spot and repeating the process.

October is the tail-end month for the Pitta's occurrence in Kenya, and this bird was presumably about to migrate south to breed. A species more usually associated with Gedi and Sokoke to the north, this record appears to be the first in Kenya for about a decade (Waiyaki, 1994), possibly due to a decrease in the breeding population in Mozambique combined with a lack of resident observers at the Kenya coast.

Reference

WAIYAKI, E. 1994. Kaya project kicks off. *Kenya Birds* 3 (1): 4–5.

James Bradley, Box 39814, Nairobi, Kenya

Scopus 18: 57, November 1994

Received 11 October 1994

Further records for the Taita Falcon *Falco fasciinucha* from Tanzania

The Taita Falcon was first collected from Tanzania by Gerd Heinrich at Kingolwira near Morogoro on 4 February 1962 (Ripley & Heinrich 1966). Previously it was known from sight records on Olosirwa in the Crater Highlands, probably during January 1945 (Elliott & Fuggles-Couchman 1948). The third and fourth records were of birds collected by Thorkild Andersen from Namabengo, some 30 km northwest of Songea: a male on 29 May 1964 and a female on 16 November 1964 (Britton 1981). The fifth record was that of Geertsema (1977) from the Gol Mountains, west of the Crater Highlands, on 1 March 1977. We can now give three further Tanzanian records of this enigmatic falcon.

On 31 October 1983, near Njombe in the Southern Highlands, EMB watched a perched adult for several minutes in good light at 09:45. The large feet, short tail and distinctive nape patches were noted.

On 22 December 1989, some 30 km northeast of Kilosa along the road to Dumila to the west of Morogoro town, and only 65 km from Kingolwira, we saw an adult flying along a local storm front. It was well seen against dark clouds (with the light behind us). The short tail, heavy head and pale rufous wash to the underparts were clearly seen several times.

On 1 December 1993 we had excellent brief views of a Taita Falcon from the track which crosses the Ukaguru Mountains east of Mamwera peak. It was immediately identified on jizz—the large head and short tail being particularly distinctive. The strong morning light highlighted the pale throat and upper breast as the bird flew virtually overhead above the pass. This record is only 40 km from the December 1989 sighting and 106 km from Kingolwira. There are many isolated crags and rock faces in

the surrounding hills and mountains and an abundance of small passerines on the Mkata Plain throughout the year.

It is, we think, reasonable to assume that a population of Taita Falcons is resident in the area but further records during other months are required to confirm this.

References

- BRITTON, P.L. 1981. Notes on the Andersen collection and other specimens from Tanzania housed in some West German museums. *Scopus* 5: 14–21.
- ELLIOTT, H.F.I. & FUGGLES-COUCHMAN, N.R. 1948. An ecological survey of the birds of the Crater Highlands and Rift lakes, Northern Tanganyika Territory. *Ibis* 90: 394–425.
- RIPLEY, S.D. & HEINRICH, G.H. 1966. Comments on the avifauna of Tanzania 1. *Postilla* 96.
- GEERTSEMA, A.A. 1977. Taita Falcon *Falco fasciinucha* from the Gol Mountains, Tanzania. *Scopus* 1: 83

N. E. Baker and E. M. Baker, Box 23404, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Scopus 18: 57–58, November 1994

Received 2 March 1994

The status of the Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus* in Tanzania

With the revision of *Birds of East Africa* (Britton 1980) in hand, I would like to draw attention to a number of references to Tanzania which require clarification. A particular one which has surfaced several times is the distribution of the Red-faced Mousebird *Urocolius indicus*. Britton (1980) states that “there are good sight records from Ruaha National Park presumably referable to [the race] *mossambicus*.” The only published reference for Ruaha NP that I can trace is in the list in Williams (1981) which includes both Blue-naped *U. macrourus* and Red-faced Mousebirds. However, these lists were not intended as sources of primary reference and contain species the author felt *should* occur (J. G. Williams, pers. comm.). The sympatry of the two species has also been questioned (H. Schifter, pers. comm.).

Vesey-Fitzgerald & Beesley (1960) record only Blue-naped for Lake Rukwa, and Procter (1968) lists only Blue-naped and Speckled *Colius striatus* for the Usangu Flats. These areas, south and southwest of Ruaha NP, form an ecological barrier to the population of *U. indicus* from extreme southwestern Tanzania. The Tanzania Atlas data base contains no records of *U. indicus* from this area and I suspect that the sightings of Red-faced actually refer to Blue-naped when the blue of the nape was not seen.

Ulfstrand (1975) refers only to Red-faced for the Mtera basin downstream from Ruaha NP, but more recent visits by J.S.S. Beesley in 1981, 1982 and Baker & Baker (in press) found only Blue-naped.

If any readers have records or references for either species for Ruaha NP I would much appreciate hearing from them.